

## CASE STUDY

The value of group sessions for  
Community Developers and  
Social Workers

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**Mary Kenny**  
Community  
Developer

Mary is a Community Developer who specialises in helping and working with isolated and marginalised people. Mary has long been an active advocate for people with disabilities and their families. Mary has an excellent reputation within Community Development and has been training and working with Moreno's methods for some years. In this Case Study Mary discusses working with her clients in groups.

From my training I have developed powerful ways of communicating with people. The methods I have learnt at Moreno, gives me a point of focus. A focus for preparation; preparation for those that are coming to work with me. It's a way of preparing myself for working with the group. It offers a complete framework, a whole framework from which to operate. Myself, participants, the group, before, after and during. Who are they and what are they coming along for? What is the best way to reach them?

There is something different at play in groups for my clients, than in one on one. My clients get to participate and to know they are participating, not just being included but feeling included. Feeling less isolated. In the group we can explore different ways to see if their responses are helpful or not and be creative and spontaneous when we do it.

I'm passionate about running groups with people because the people in the groups I run, rarely get the opportunities to be acknowledged as really authentic human beings. The people I work with don't operate out of words. For a variety of reasons their capacity to use language is quite limited. My clients develop ways to express themselves that they never had. These methods are brilliant. So while these methods are visual and active, they also give us something like a language to express and describe.

It is not a cerebral thing – more a deeper authenticity as a person is being presented.

On a deeper level I am healed by their being made whole, I am made whole. By recognizing their gifts, mine are recognised as well. The training allows me to actually meet people more authentically. It has helped me to feel safe in myself to meet the moments that happen in groups. The methods have allowed me to “think like other people” and “think like other groups”, the capacity to walk in their shoes, and to see the world through their eyes. These methods take the grinding out of working with other people. They take the grinding out of life.

There are thousands of ways that my training has taught me for getting what the people I work with are up to. How do you get it without sinking into their morass – poverty, black and white thinking, poor spontaneity, poor choices of theirs and others, real and present dangers from their physical or mental limitations. Language is not enough. And you need to walk in their shoes to do this work, which is quite difficult but entirely possible with these methods.

This training has helped me tap into my own wellspring of spontaneity and creativity. These methods, that's what a person needs to be wanting to do, and is what I like to do – aerobics for the psyche. I have learned how to get with people.

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